

Boozhoo. Aniin. Ogimaawajiweb indizhinikaaz. Wiikoonametaawangaasing indoonjibaa. Indishpenim gii-wiidoowagwaa nijanishinaabeg. My name is Thomas Fowler and it has been an honor to be a servant of the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin people. With tribal membership direction and support, I humbly accept this year's nomination for St. Croix Tribal Council Maple Plain Representative.

As an incumbent St. Croix Tribal Council Representative, I have enjoyed participating in and witnessing the incredible, growing tide of change within our tribe. Listening to the membership voice new ideas and concerns from around our communities was vital in addressing a wide variety of issues our tribe faces to make necessary changes. Housing, economic prosperity, language and culture efforts, mental health and wellness, workforce development, education, drug abuse, and recovery efforts are ongoing paramount challenges. We've seen some great projects in the past few years. Some of these more recent projects include 20-3 to 4 bedroom brand new homes being constructed throughout the communities, multiple home renovation projects, a culturally based treatment facility on 800+ acres of land including wild rice beds, lakes, river systems, and 20 miles of wilderness trails, "Zhashagiins," and a beautiful new event center in Siren set to open very soon. Last year Ojibwemowin was also declared the official language of the St. Croix tribe paving the way for our newly installed dual-language highway signs which introduce our tribal boundaries in our native language.

I am passionate about our culture, heritage, language, and ceremonies. I would love to see an Ojibwemowin immersion program developed as well as more cultural social opportunities for youth, elders, and all our people (camps, presentations, symposiums, workshops, powwows, dances, trips, etc.) that assist us as we strengthen our identity as Anishinaabe people. I would like to see more investment in youth prevention. Strengthening our sovereignty through constitutional reform is another important goal for our membership; I would love to see changes in how we define our membership and a separation of powers which makes sense for our tribe. There is so much important work to be done. It is a personal and professional goal of mine to help improve our communities, the membership, and myself. We all do better when we help each other, hold each other accountable, and are able to trust each other. If you would like to talk more with me over some coffee about your ideas and concerns as we move forward this election season, please let me know. I look forward to our future here. Good luck to all candidates.

Chi Miigwech,